

Dear Human Services Committee:

My name is Ashley Makar. I'm a resident of Hamden, and I work with immigrant communities throughout CT through Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services (IRIS), a statewide agency based in New Haven. I am writing in strong support of S.B. 284, AN ACT INCREASING THE AGE FROM EIGHT TO EIGHTEEN YEARS FOR AN INCOME-ELIGIBLE PERSON TO OBTAIN MEDICAL ASSISTANCE REGARDLESS OF IMMIGRATION STATUS. This bill would provide hundreds of clients me and my co-workers serve access to vital healthcare.

I have seen the devastating effects of the lack of access to healthcare among the immigrant families I work with through IRIS. I personally tried to help an undocumented single mom get medical care for her teenaged daughter. They had to resort to proceeding with a vital medical procedure that the family had no way of paying for. They received a bill for over \$1900. Now, the family is in even more medical debt than before, which is very distressing for a family that struggles to make ends meet, month after month.

I also serve as a part-time chaplain at Yale-New Haven hospital, where I am acutely aware of patients' dire need for medical insurance, regardless of immigration status. I wholeheartedly support S.B. 284, and I urge the committee to pass this legislation.

Expanding access to HUSKY up to age 18 regardless of immigration status is an important step in ensuring our immigrant community has access to the healthcare we need. But our work doesn't end with expanding access up to age 18; we need to open access to HUSKY and healthcare to all immigrants of any age, including parents and adults.

Thank you for your time,

Ashley Michelle Makar

Community Liaison, Integrated Refugee & Immigrant Services